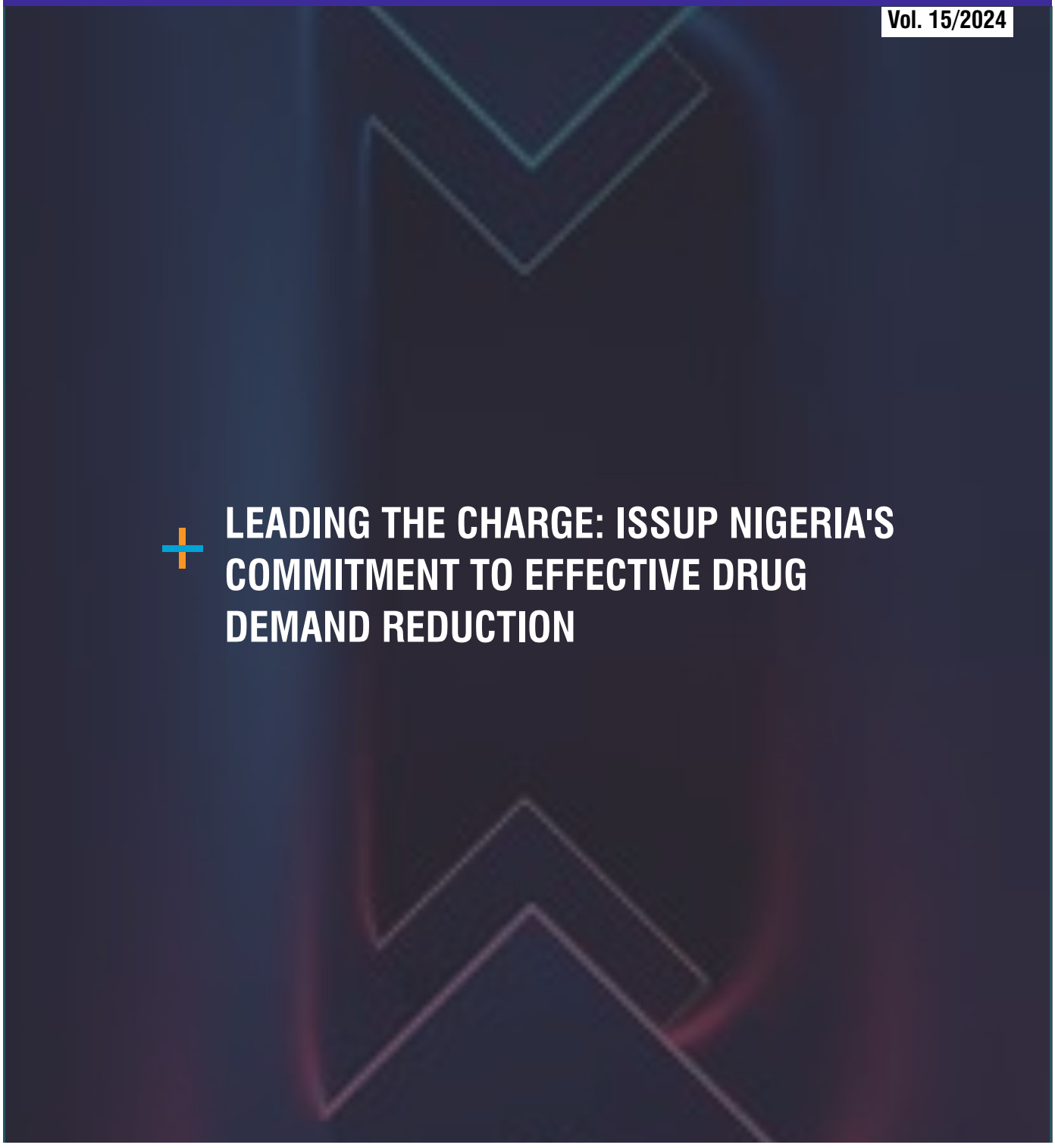
SOLACE

ISSUP INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SUBSTANCE USE PROFESSIONALS
NIGERIA chapter

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY OF SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS

Vol. 15/2024



LEADING THE CHARGE: ISSUP NIGERIA'S COMMITMENT TO EFFECTIVE DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

CONTENTS

LEADING THE CHARGE: ISSUP NIGERIA'S COMMITMENT TO EFFECTIVE DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION — Page 1

ABIA STATE BRANCH — Page 3

ABUJA F.C.T BRANCH — Page 8

BAYELSA — Page 10

CROSS RIVER BRANCH — Page 15

DELTA STATE — Page 17

KADUNA STATE — Page 19

LAGOS STATE — Page 21

NIGER STATE — Page 24

RIVERS STATE — Page 27

Editorial Team

Ejikeme M. Ogueji - Chairman
Theresa Moses - Secretary
Emmanuel Akpan - Member
Mitchell Ofoyeju - Member
Emeodu E. Nwabueze Ph.D - Member

LEADING THE CHARGE: ISSUP NIGERIA'S COMMITMENT TO EFFECTIVE DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

As we reflect on the global observance of the 2024 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, celebrated on June 26, the theme "The evidence is clear: invest in prevention" resonates with ever-increasing urgency. This year's campaign highlights the importance of investing in prevention, emphasizing that proactive, evidence-based strategies are the most effective way to tackle the global drug crisis. In Nigeria, the escalating drug problem demands not only recognition but immediate action, particularly as current statistics show that an estimated 15.6 million Nigerians use drugs, with a significant 30% of these users being women.

ISSUP Nigeria has been at the forefront of efforts to address this growing crisis. Inaugurated in 2019, ISSUP Nigeria has consistently advocated for a science-based, compassionate approach to drug prevention and treatment. Since its inception, the organization has brought together stakeholders across various sectors, creating a multidisciplinary network committed to tackling substance use with the highest levels of professionalism and dedication.

The 2024 International Day Against Drug Abuse provided a powerful platform for ISSUP Nigeria to highlight the ongoing crisis and mobilize communities toward prevention. Throughout June, ISSUP Nigeria members across the country organized a series of impactful events, ranging from workshops and community outreach to public forums. These activities brought together diverse stakeholders—including youth, educators, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, and community leaders—all focused on finding solutions to Nigeria's growing drug problem.

The success of these initiatives lies in ISSUP Nigeria's unwavering commitment to evidence-based prevention strategies. Rooted in scientific research and strengthened by compassionate outreach, these programmes aim not only to reduce the social and economic impacts of drug use but also to support individuals grappling with substance use disorders.

A key element of ISSUP Nigeria's post-June activities has been the empowerment of local communities to lead prevention efforts. By equipping these communities with the necessary tools and resources, ISSUP Nigeria has fostered sustainable, grassroots initiatives in states such as Abia, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Kaduna, Lagos, Niger, and Rivers among others.

This community-driven approach has become a powerful force in the fight against drug abuse, demonstrating that local solutions can have a national impact.

Youth-centered initiatives have also gained momentum, with ISSUP Nigeria working closely with young people to transform them into prevention influencers. By providing platforms for leadership and amplifying their voices, ISSUP Nigeria ensures that the next generation plays a critical role in advancing the drug prevention agenda.

The formation of ISSUP Nigeria on October 17, 2019, at the Chelsea Hotel in Abuja, marked a significant milestone in the nation's fight against substance use and addiction. For years, professionals in the drug demand reduction sector sought a platform that would unify their efforts and promote a multidisciplinary, evidence-based approach to prevention and treatment. The launch of ISSUP Nigeria was a long-awaited response to this need.

The association's National Executive Council, led by Dr. Martin O. Agwogie as President, set out with a clear vision: to build a skilled, ethical network of professionals committed to transforming the landscape of substance use prevention and treatment in Nigeria. Over the past five years, ISSUP Nigeria has grown from a small group of passionate individuals into a leading force, shaping national policies and fostering international collaborations to address Nigeria's substance use crisis.

As ISSUP Nigeria prepares to host its 6th Annual Conference, the decision to hold this year's event in Lagos for the first time marks a new chapter in its journey. This shift from Abuja reflects the organization's ongoing commitment to expanding its reach and ensuring that its mission resonates in every corner of Nigeria. Lagos, with its dynamic and diverse population, is the perfect venue for bringing the conversation on drug prevention and treatment directly to the people.

The 2024 conference promises to be a landmark event, drawing experts and professionals from across the country and beyond to reflect on the progress made, share insights, and chart a course for future advancements. As ISSUP Nigeria continues to grow in influence and impact, the 6th Annual Conference will serve as a crucial platform for strengthening national and international collaborations in the fight against substance use.

The road ahead for ISSUP Nigeria is clear: sustained investment in prevention is not just a strategy but a necessity. By continuing to advocate for greater funding, policy attention, and community engagement, ISSUP Nigeria remains dedicated to driving long-term change. The legacy of the 2024 International Day Against Drug Abuse must not fade; instead, it should serve as a rallying call for continuous action.

ISSUP Nigeria's journey is just beginning, but it already stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved when professionals come together with a shared vision and a commitment to evidence-based strategies. The battle against substance abuse is far from over, but with ISSUP Nigeria at the forefront, there is renewed hope for a healthier, drug-free future for the country. Their continued dedication to prevention, treatment, and collaboration will be instrumental in driving meaningful, lasting change across Nigeria.

Ejikeme M. Ogueji
Head Editorial Team

ABIA STATE BRANCH

ISSUP Abia State Branch Marks World Drug Day 2024 with Seminar for Vigilante Groups

On 19th June 2024, the Abia state branch of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) Nigeria Chapter organised a seminar for vigilante groups in Aba North Local Government Area (L.G.A.) as part of the activities commemorating World Drug Day 2024. The seminar targeted vigilante groups, recognising both their vulnerability to drug misuse among members and their critical role as first responders in cases of domestic violence exacerbated by substance use. The need for enhanced knowledge in therapeutic techniques was emphasised to enable these groups to perform their duties more effectively.

Representatives of the NDLEA, participants and ISSUP Abia branch members after the training

The seminar was attended by key stakeholders, including representatives from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Vigilante Groups, Man O' War, and members of the public.

In his opening remarks, ISSUP Abia state coordinator, Dr. Azu Oko, stressed the urgent need to tackle drug misuse and illicit drug trafficking through prevention. He highlighted that preventionbased on raising awareness and drug misuse education, saves lives and resources that would otherwise be spent on treatment and rehabilitation. Dr. Nwaoha gave a presentation on alcohol as a drug, while Honourable Blessing Nwagba, PhD, addressed the stigma faced by individuals struggling with addiction. She explained that fear of stigma often prevents people who use drugs from seeking the help and support they need to overcome addiction.

ISSUP Abia State Coordinator, Dr. Azu Oko

The Head of Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) at NDLEA Abia state, Mrs. Maurice Binta, further highlighted the increasing prevalence of drug misuse in Nigeria. She

warned that, if preventive measures are not taken, Abia state could see a worrying rise in drug misuse, potentially increasing from the current 14% to 40% by 2030, as predicted by the National Bureau of Statistics.

Public Relations Officer (PRO) of NDLEA Abia State Command, Okechukwu Akunne facilitating

The seminar concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session, facilitated by the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of NDLEA Abia State Command, Okechukwu Akunne. The event ended with closing remarks delivered by ISSUP member Mr. Anthony Ihekuna.

To conclude the World Drug Day activities, ISSUP Abia branch also took part in the Abia State Government's anti-drug misuse rally, held in the state capital, Umuahia, on 26th June 2024. This rally reinforced the state's collective commitment to the fight against drug misuse.

Substance Use Prevention Sensitisation at Fortune Victory and Peace School: ISSUP Abuja FCT Branch Leads Awareness Campaign

On 26 June 2024, to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, ISSUP Abuja FCT branch held a key drug prevention Sensitisation programme at Fortune Victory and Peace School, Pigba Kasa, Apo. This event aimed to raise awareness about drug abuse and reduce the demand for drugs by involving both students and staff in the conversation.

ISSUP FCT members with students of Fortune Victory school

The programme focused on educating students about the risks of drug use and helping them develop skills to resist peer pressure, make positive choices, and look after their mental health. Through interactive sessions, the students learned about the harmful effects of drugs and the

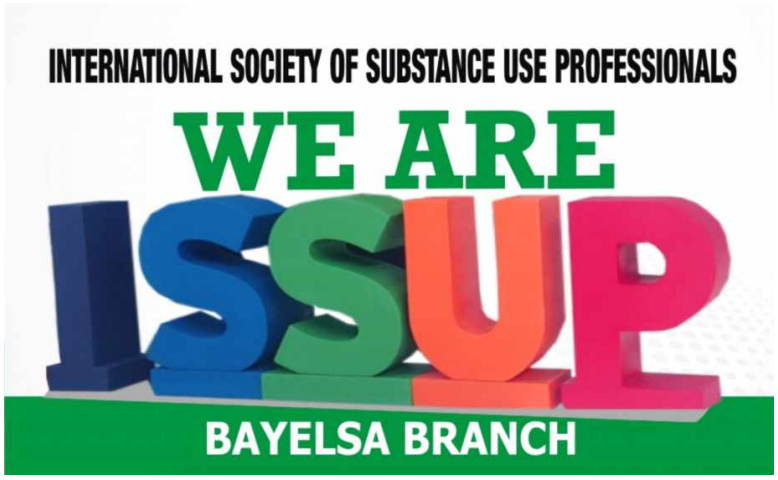
benefits of staying drug-free. The school staff also received training on how to spot early signs of drug use and how to guide and support their students effectively.

ISSUP FCT members with students of Peace school

By bringing these drug prevention messages directly to schools, ISSUP Abuja FCT branch is working to reduce drug demand at the grassroots level. This event is part of a larger effort to give young people and their teachers the knowledge and tools they need to prevent drug problems before they begin.

The success of this programme shows how important community-based prevention strategies are in reducing drug use and protecting young people from the dangers of substance abuse. ISSUP Abuja FCT branch is committed to leading these efforts and creating a safer, healthier future for youth in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

ISSUP Bayelsa: 2024 Initiatives in Substance Use Prevention and Treatment



The inauguration of the Nigerian Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) on 17th October 2019 marked an important moment in the fight against substance use challenges. This milestone has paved the way for numerous evidence-based programmes and training initiatives aimed at drug demand reduction across the country. With active state branches contributing to drug policy formulation and implementation, ISSUP's mission extends nationwide, emphasising collaboration among government agencies, political leaders, professionals, civil society groups, families, community leaders, and other stakeholders. This multi-sectoral approach stresses the importance of comprehensive strategies to combat substance use and abuse.

Background pictures to commence the training

The Bayelsa Drug Committee's report indicates that Bayelsa has the third-highest rate of drug use among young people in Nigeria, prompting immediate action. In response, the Bayelsa State Government established the Bayelsa State Drug Abuse Control Committee on March 16, 2021, in Yenagoa. ISSUP Bayelsa branch has since partnered with the state's rehabilitation committee to tackle substance abuse. Their efforts focus on raising awareness, promoting

recovery, and building collaborations across different sectors. These efforts aim to mobilise the resources, expertise, and support required for effective prevention programmes.

ISSUP Bayelsa's 2024 Objectives and Activities:

Research and Outreach: Conduct research and community outreach programmes that equip young people with the knowledge and skills to prioritise mental health and make informed decisions about substance use.

Awareness: Raise awareness about the prevention of alcohol and substance misuse, as well as the dangers of prescription drug misuse.

Partnerships: Foster partnerships with stakeholders to promote prevention strategies.

Harm Reduction: Shift the narrative from stigmatisation to harm reduction, ensuring humane treatment and support for those affected by substance use.

Evidence-Based Resources: Promote and disseminate evidence-based materials to inform and support prevention efforts.

Dr. Grace Scent-ISSUP State Coordinator giving a talk on Harm Reduction and Wellness

Key 2024 Programmes

Sensitisation Visit to Yenagoa Correctional Centre – 13th March 2024

To launch their initiatives, ISSUP Bayelsa elected to visit the Yenagoa Correctional Centre to raise awareness on harm reduction strategies. With the cooperation of the prison's commander, the team, in collaboration with the Prison Ministry, engaged inmates on the dangers of drug use. Talks on well-being were delivered by Dr. Grace Scent, the state coordinator and Dr. Wisdom Krokeyi, focusing on empowering inmates to make informed

Visit to Bayelsa Correctional Centre

choices about their drug use. A follow-up visit included wellness outreach, screening, and treatment programmes for both inmates and officers, with plans for drug relief materials in future visits.

Campus Outreach for Drug Demand Reduction – 26th-27th April 2024

In collaboration with the Bayelsa State Higher Education Students Loan Board, ISSUP Bayelsa conducted a two-day campus outreach at the Bayelsa State Medical University. The outreach aimed to provide prevention education and support to students from six higher institutions across the state. Student representatives engaged in dialogue, and some were inducted into ISSUP Bayelsa. The programme underscored the importance of fostering a healthy academic environment and supporting students in making informed decisions regarding substance use.

State coordinator Dr. Scent presenting welcome address during the opening ceremony of the 2-day mental health program for students at the Bayelsa Medical University auditorium

World Drug Day – 26th June 2024

As part of its commitment to drug demand reduction, ISSUP Bayelsa supported World Drug Day with activities extending from street markets to motor parks. A road walk, organised in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), culminated in a colourful visit to the NDLEA state command. The event highlighted the importance of ongoing community education on drug hazards.

ISSUP representatives at the NDLEA Office Okaka Yenagoa after a road sensitization walk

Follow-Up Visit to Yenagoa Correctional Centre – 8th August 2024

A welfare visit by ISSUP Bayelsa's new postgraduate inductees revealed a high prevalence of cannabis and psychoactive substance use among inmates. Counselling sessions provided promising results; with many inmates sharing that drug use was a coping mechanism for anxiety. The next outreach will focus on training staff, reducing inmate access to drugs, and introducing harm reduction strategies, including consultations with medical professionals.

Looking Ahead:

For the remainder of 2024, ISSUP Bayelsa will continue its mission by expanding its outreach to families, workplaces, and schools. Further initiatives include media prevention training, collaboration with experts in prevention and recovery, and efforts to secure grant sponsorships to support these vital programmes.

Advocacy for a Drug-Free Society

ISSUP Bayelsa advocates for a holistic approach to substance use prevention, emphasising the need for: increased awareness and destigmatisation of substance use, enhanced access to mental health services, institutional support for effective drug policies, ongoing capacity building for professionals, and resilience training for vulnerable populations.

A Call to Action:

The well-being of professionals in substance use prevention is integral to the success of Nigeria's healthcare system, particularly in Bayelsa state. By addressing the mental health needs of both prevention professionals and those they serve, ISSUP Bayelsa is committed to fostering a supportive environment that enhances care quality and improves outcomes. This investment is not only necessary but also a testament to the shared commitment to a healthier and more resilient future for all.

Undergraduate students' wing of ISSUP Bayelsa Branch newly inducted

ISSUP Cross River State Branch: 2024 World Drug Day Activities

To mark the 2024 World Drug Day, the International Society of Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Professionals (ISSUP) Cross River state branch organised a series of activities aimed at raising awareness and promoting the prevention of drug use in local communities.

Advocacy visit to Nigerian Navy Catholic Women

On 19th June, in partnership with the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital Calabar (FNPHC), ISSUP hosted a lecture on "Recent Trends and Emerging Drugs among the Young Population in Nigerian Communities." This session discussed the growing problem of new drugs being used by young people in Nigeria and the urgent need for prevention.

Continuing the week's events, ISSUP Cross River state held a webinar on 22nd June titled "Drug Education for Youth: The Basic Principles." The webinar focused on giving young people the knowledge they need to make informed choices and stay away from drugs. This partnership with FNPHC helped to spread important information about drug prevention to a wider audience.

ISSUP also paid a courtesy visit to the Commissioner for Science and Technology, Cross River state, who expressed support for ISSUP's prevention work. The Commissioner pledged to partner with ISSUP in the future to help strengthen drug prevention efforts.

As part of its advocacy work, ISSUP visited the Nigerian Navy Catholic Women at Akim Navy Barracks, Calabar. During this session, the group discussed the best ways to prevent drug use, highlighting the importance of community involvement in addressing the issue.

At the Lecture organised in collaboration with FNPH

ISSUP also carried out an outreach visit to St. Anne's School, where they spoke to both students and teachers about the risks of drug use. The team answered questions and encouraged open discussion on how young people can protect themselves from substance abuse.

Finally, to wrap up the week's activities, ISSUP Cross River State joined the Cross River State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for a road walk. This event raised awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and showed how collective action can help build safer, drug-free communities.

Through these World Drug Day activities, ISSUP Cross River State demonstrated the importance of working together to prevent drug use. By educating young people, advocating for change, and engaging the community, the branch continues to promote a drug-free future for Nigeria's youth.

Advocacy visit to Nigerian Navy Catholic Women

ISSUP Delta State Branch Commemorates International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2024

The International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) Delta state branch, in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Port Command, successfully commemorated the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 June 2024. This year's event centred on the theme, "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention," highlighting the critical need for community awareness and action against drug abuse.

ISSUP Delta during a drug abuse prevention road walk

The day commenced with a vibrant sensitisation campaign, featuring a walk that began at the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) main gate. Spanning 12 kilometres over three hours, participants—armed with banners and placards—urged the public to reject drug abuse and embrace prevention strategies. The rally fostered a strong sense of community spirit, as participants engaged with onlookers to educate them about the dangers of drug misuse.

Sensitisation efforts extended beyond the streets, reaching various locations such as marketplaces, workshops, and even a riverine community in Warri. To further amplify the message, team members visited several primary and secondary schools, engaging students and educators in discussions about the harmful effects of drugs. The involvement of other NGOs and federal parastatals, including the Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Customs, and the Nigerian Fire Service, underscored a united front against youth drug abuse.

The ISSUP Delta state branch emphasised that drug abuse is a concern that transcends age, affecting both young and old. The campaign aimed to educate the community on the harmful effects of drugs and advocate for prevention as the most effective solution to mitigate substance abuse.

The sensitisation rally concluded back at the NPA main gate, where participants enjoyed light refreshments and reflected on the day's impactful activities. Key figures present included:

Reverend Father Ogaga, Delta State ISSUP Chairman, Mrs. Olabisi Adiosun, Vice Chairperson, Comrade Nosa Godswill, P.R.O., Mrs. Maya, Member, Miss EdesiriJeroh, Member, Miss Ejoke, Member, Miss Tessy Emekhare, Member

he successful execution of this event reaffirms the ISSUP Delta state branch's commitment to raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of investing in preventive measures. Through collective efforts and community engagement, we strive to foster a healthier, drug-free environment for all.

Together, we can make a difference—invest in prevention, and let us build a brighter future free from the shadows of substance abuse.

ISSUP Kaduna Branch and Interfaith Peace and Unity Initiative Mark World Drug Day with Community Programme

On 26th June 2024, the Kaduna state branch of ISSUP (International Society of Substance Use Professionals), in collaboration with the Interfaith Peace and Unity Initiative, organised a significant community outreach programme in commemoration of World Drug Day. This year's theme, "Invest in Prevention," guided the day's activities, aiming to raise awareness about substance use and mental health.

ISSUP Delta during a drug abuse prevention road walk

The programme, held in the Romi New Extension community, featured a public lecture, a community awareness campaign, and a dynamic Q&A session with Dr. Salihu Hassan as the guest speaker. These events were designed to educate the public on the importance of substance use prevention and to equip community members with strategies for engaging effectively in prevention efforts.

Director of Interfaith Peace and Unity Initiative and members of IPUI

A powerful analogy was used to illustrate the challenges of mental health: when we experience physical pain such as a toothache or headache, our brain sends a signal to alert us. However, when the brain itself is unwell, there is no internal mechanism to signal the problem. As a result, the entire body suffers. This highlights the importance of investing in brain health, particularly through substance use prevention.

The event was made possible thanks to the support and leadership of key figures such as ISSUP Kaduna State Coordinator, Prof. Ronke Awopetu, alongside Bishop Korewi, Dr Salihu Hassan, Dr. Abiola Tajudeen, and Ejikeme McBishops Ogueji. Their expertise and dedication to the cause contributed to the success of the day.

Participant at the June 26th event in Kaduna

By continuing to prioritise prevention, we can work together to build a healthier, drug-free society. Let us remain committed to creating a future where communities are empowered to protect their youth and ensure mental wellness for all.

ISSUP members: Dr. Salihu (middle), Ms. Udeme (3rd from right) and Ejikeme M. Ogueji (far right) at the event

ISSUP Lagos Branch Activities Report

PASS and ISSUP Lagos Celebrate Children's Day 2024

On May 24, 2024, PASS (Parents Against Sexual Violence and Substance Abuse) in conjunction with the ISSUP Lagos state branch, celebrated Children's Day under the theme Healthy Living. The event took place at Scaffolding School, Isheri-Oshun, Alimosho, Lagos. In attendance were some of the school's teachers and students, alongside distinguished guests: Dr. Adetolu Olatunde, Mrs. Ogunluyi Titilayo, and Dr. Rosemary Ogedengbe.

Dr. Adetolu Olatunde, Mrs. Ogunluyi Titilayo (state coordinator), and Dr. Rosemary Ogedengbe

World Drug Day 2024 Commemoration

ISSUP Lagos state branch marked the 2024 World Drug Day by participating in a Walk/Rally organized by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Lagos State Command, on Saturday, June 15, 2024. The walk began at 5 Jogunomi Street, Gbagada Phase 2 Estate, and concluded at the 9 Brigade, Nigerian Army Sports Complex, Ikeja. The event was led by Mrs. Titi Ogunluyi, State Coordinator of ISSUP Lagos branch. Also present were members of the Lagos branch, including Dcn. Chinyere O. Eziaghighala, Deputy Commander of Drug Demand Reduction, NDLEA Lagos State Command.

At walk/Rally organized by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Lagos State Command

On June 27, 2024, the African Bridge Initiative, in collaboration with ISSUP Lagos branch and NDLEA Lagos Command, conducted an advocacy program at Ojota Senior Secondary School, Lagos. Addressing the students, Dr. Adetolu Olatunde, Treasurer of ISSUP Lagos state branch, emphasized the importance of staying away from drugs and making informed, healthy life choices.

Advocacy visi to Ojota Secondary School

On September 19, 2024, ISSUP Lagos state branch featured on UNILAG FM, Nigeria's first campus radio station, to discuss the topic Recovery: A Global Menace. The conversation highlighted the growing impact of substance use on society and the need for a collaborative approach to combating addiction. The discussion panel included Mrs. Mary Miller-Bubor, Assistant Secretary of ISSUP Lagos state branch; Mr. Peter Adenibuyan, National Assistant Financial Secretary; and Mrs. Titilope Ogunluyi, ISSUP Lagos state branch Coordinator.

These events reflect ISSUP Lagos branch's continued commitment to raising awareness and taking action against substance abuse, while promoting healthy living and community well-being in Lagos State.

ISSUP Lagos Features on UNILAG FM

ISSUP Niger State Branch Marks the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Theme: "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention"

On 26th June 2024, the ISSUP Niger state branch, in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), organised a series of impactful events to commemorate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The activities, centred on the theme "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention", aimed to raise awareness, promote education, and provide direct support to tackle substance abuse in the region.

National Drug IQ Quiz Competition

The commemoration began with the 1st Niger State National Drug IQ Quiz competition, held between 11th and 20th June 2024. The competition, designed for secondary schools across the state, engaged students in a dynamic and educational format, testing their knowledge on drug prevention, the dangers of substance misuse, and the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles. This interactive platform helped raise awareness and encouraged youth involvement in the fight against drug abuse.

Participants at the 1st Niger State National Drug IQ Quiz competition

Sensitisation and Advocacy Programmes

Following the quiz competition, ISSUP Niger State, alongside NDLEA, conducted a series of sensitisation and advocacy programmes across several schools in the state. These initiatives aimed to educate students on the risks associated with drug use and promote preventive measures. The outreach efforts also included a radio phone-in programme on Crystal Radio 91.3 FM, Minna, held on Monday, 24th June 2024. Lawrence Paul, the ISSUP Niger State Coordinator, and Mr. Shehu Noma Gwadabawa (CN), the NDLEA Commander of Niger State, engaged listeners on the crucial need for prevention strategies and the role communities can play in supporting young people.

ISSUP Niger State/NDLEA sensitization program to Crystal FM 91.3

Grand Finale and Booth Clinic

The activities culminated on 26th June 2024 with a grand finale at the NDLEA Niger State Command headquarters. Dignitaries from across the state, representatives from various schools, and key stakeholders gathered to mark the occasion. ISSUP Niger State set up a booth clinic at the event to offer free counselling and early intervention support for individuals showing signs of drug use. This initiative provided attendees with direct access to resources, support, and guidance to prevent further involvement with illicit substances.

The event was a resounding success, reinforcing the importance of investing in prevention and highlighting the critical role that education, awareness, and community engagement play in addressing the challenges of drug misuse.

Students, NYSC members, NDLEA and other participants at the June 26th event in Niger state

A cross section of participants

ISSUP Rivers State Marks World Drug Day with Rehabilitation Centre Visit and Awareness Campaign

On 26th June 2024, the Rivers State branch of the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP) commemorated World Drug Day with a significant visit to a local rehabilitation centre in Iriebe. In line with the global theme, "Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention," the event underscored the importance of drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation, while highlighting the essential role of community support in addressing substance use disorders.

ISSUP Rivers members at a local rehabilitation centre in Iriebe

A Day of Impact and Encouragement at the Rehabilitation Centre

ISSUP Rivers State team received a warm welcome from the rehabilitation centre's staff, who shared the centre's mission and accomplishments in the field of substance abuse treatment. A thorough tour of the facility followed, taking the ISSUP team through treatment rooms, counselling areas, and recreational spaces. This provided a valuable insight into the centre's day-to-day operations, demonstrating the supportive environment offered to individuals on the path to recovery.

During the visit, ISSUP members engaged directly with patients, offering words of encouragement and sharing information on support networks and recovery opportunities. These meaningful conversations aimed to lift spirits and inspire hope, reinforcing the message that recovery is attainable with the right support systems in place.

An educational session was conducted for both patients and staff, focusing on the latest trends in drug abuse, prevention strategies, and the vital role of community involvement. The session

featured interactive presentations and discussions, offering valuable insights into the ongoing need for sustained efforts in drug prevention and rehabilitation.

Collaborative Efforts with FRSC and NDLEA

In a bid to extend their advocacy efforts, the ISSUP Rivers State team also visited the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) on the same day. The sector commander warmly received the team and expressed a keen interest in supporting ISSUP's mission. He extended an invitation for ISSUP to collaborate with the FRSC's Special Marshal Corps, offering specific roadside locations where ISSUP could raise awareness about the dangers of drug use, smoking, and managing stress among drivers.

Representative of ISSUP Rivers State with the Rivers State Coordinator, NDLEA, during a courtesy visit to the NDLEA Commander

ISSUP Rivers State welcomed the offer and emphasised their dedication to increasing awareness, particularly about the effects of substance use on road safety. The sector commander pledged his full support, aiming to synergise with ISSUP's advocacy efforts to promote safer, drug-free communities.

Additionally, ISSUP Rivers State paid a visit to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to strengthen their partnership in the fight against substance abuse in Rivers State. The NDLEA area commander expressed his readiness to collaborate with ISSUP, reaffirming the importance of united efforts in making the state a safer, drug-free place for all.

Dr. Bertha Esukene Pius (3rd from right) alongside ISSUP members and Officers of the FRSC Rivers State during a recent courtesy visit

Courtesy visit to the NDLEA

Expanding Awareness through Media: ISSUP Rivers State's Radio Campaign

Earlier, on 14th June 2024, ISSUP Rivers State conducted an outreach at Radio Station 92.7 FM as part of their ongoing awareness campaign. The radio platform, chosen for its wide reach, enabled ISSUP to engage with a broad and diverse audience on the critical issue of substance abuse.

During the radio session, ISSUP representatives discussed the dangers of drug abuse, available resources for prevention and rehabilitation, and the crucial role communities play in combating substance use. The campaign was well received, sparking public discourse and reinforcing the need for community engagement in addressing substance use disorders.

Advocacy and awareness creation at a radio station

Looking Ahead: Strengthening Advocacy and Prevention

ISSUP Rivers state's recent activities highlight their commitment to substance abuse prevention and the promotion of rehabilitation. Their collaboration with rehabilitation centres, government agencies, and media outlets underscores the multi-faceted approach required to effectively tackle drug abuse. By investing in prevention and promoting greater awareness, ISSUP Rivers state continues to work towards a future where individuals and communities are empowered to overcome the challenges of substance use and build healthier, drug-free lives.

Radio program by ISSUP Rivers state branch